

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ARIZONA STUDENTS SCORE ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN READING, LANGUAGE AND MATH

PHOENIX (Wednesday, July 13, 2005). Arizona's school chief, Tom Horne, released the results of the 2005 Terra Nova (a test that replaced the Stanford 9) and AIMS tests.

"The results show that Arizona's students scored above the national average in reading, language, and math. For math, the students in the second through ninth grades are ranked in the 56th percentile when measured against the rest of the country. In reading, students placed in the 54th percentile, and ranked in the 56th percentile for language," Horne noted.

The breakdown by grade is as follows:

2 nd grade Math:	58 th percentile;	Reading:	54 th percentile;	Language:	54 th percentile
3 rd grade Math:	58 th percentile;	Reading:	50 th percentile;	Language:	48 th percentile
4 th grade Math:	59 th percentile;	Reading:	52 nd percentile;	Language:	54 th percentile
5 th grade Math:	54 th percentile;	Reading:	56 th percentile;	Language:	54 th percentile
6 th grade Math:	58 th percentile;	Reading:	56 th percentile;	Language:	50 th percentile
7 th grade Math:	54 th percentile;	Reading:	54 th percentile;	Language:	58 th percentile
8 th grade Math:	58 th percentile;	Reading:	56 th percentile;	Language:	54 th percentile
9 th grade Math:	54 th percentile;	Reading:	56 th percentile;	Language:	54 th percentile

Horne added: "This is the first year for the Terra Nova. Last year, the testing program went out to bid, and the company that produces Terra Nova underbid the company that produces Stanford 9 by about \$9 million over the five year contract. At the time, I warned in a press release dated August 16, 2004: 'Whenever a state has switched tests there has been a short term decline in scores as teachers and students adjust to the new test. We should expect that next year for Arizona as well.' However, the anticipated decline occurred only in math. The reading score increased from the 53rd percentile to the 54th percentile, and the language score increased from the 50th percentile to the 56th percentile. The key point is that Arizona's students scored above the national average in all subjects. This contrasts with a mistaken inference that people sometimes draw from Arizona being ranked 49th or 50th in funding. The fact is that we are above average in the academic performance of Arizona's students. This is a tribute to Arizona teachers, principals, and all members of the Arizona education community."

Horne also explained a new pattern of results on the AIMS scores for grades three through eight. “In prior years, we tested in only grades three, five, eight and high school. Beginning this year, we tested in every grade, and have constructed a vertical score under which the grade in one year can relate to the grade in another year. This means, for example, that the amount of knowledge demonstrated to pass the test in one year has to be greater than the amount of knowledge demonstrated in the earlier grade. That does not always happen where standards are inconsistent from grade to grade. This is the first year that those standards were made consistent. The third grade reading score remained constant, with 72 percent of students testing proficient both last year and this year. However, scores for other grade levels changed, in some cases substantially, in order to accomplish this consistency of difficulty from grade to grade. These standards were the result of a process, including participation by over 50 Arizona educators, which meets federal governmental guidelines, and is essentially the same in all 50 states.”

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